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(64)

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN (PDRY)

'Ali Nasir Muhammad al-HASANI

1969

Prime Minister, Member of the Presidential Council and Minister of Defense

'Ali Nasir Muhammad al-Hasani (pronounced hahSAHNee), Minister of Defense since December 1969, was also named Prime Minister and a member of the Presidential Council on 2 August 1971. His appointments followed the dramatic ouster of moderate Prime Minister Muhammad 'Ali Haytham by an extremist and apparently Maoist group led by Council Chairman Salim Rubay'i 'Ali. Hasani, a moderate leftist, might be considered a balancing factor on an executive body whose other two members are extreme leftists.

On 14 September 1971 Hasani submitted his resignation as Prime Minister because his authority was so limited, stating that "it was impossible to conduct government in the atmosphere of 'uprisings' and interference from 'Ali." He withdrew his resignation following assurances from his colleagues on the National Front (NF) Executive Committee that they would not interfere in his affairs.

he attained his public positions of power by virtue of his important tribal connections in Dathinah and his reputation as a guerrilla against the British in preindependence days.

Since early 1969 Hasani has been a member of the powerful Executive Committee of the ruling NF party, known prior to August 1969 as the National Liberation Front (NLF). He was elected to the General Command (now known as the Central Committee),

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the governing body of the NF, at the Fourth NF Congress, held in March 1968, and was reelected in April 1972. In April 1971 Hasani was named a member of the Supreme People's Council (the legislature).

Political Views

Hasani, although referred to as a moderate [redacted]. Currently he is a supporter of 'Abd al-Fattah Isma'il, secretary general of the NF and member of the Presidential Council, who is the leader of the pro-Soviet wing in the NF. Previously, however, Hasani was a close associate and supporter of ex-Prime Minister Muhammad 'Ali Haytham, who was the leader of a so-called moderate faction whose extremism contained some pragmatism. He agreed with Haytham about the need for more realistic policies in military expenditures and assistance to such dissident groups as the Revolutionary Democratic Party, which is attempting to unseat the regime in the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR). Hasani has opposed such 'Ali-inspired extremist actions as the seizure of lands by landless laborers, of fishing boats by crews and of unoccupied houses by the homeless.

Early Life

'Ali Nasir Muhammad al-Hasani, or 'Ali Nasir Muhammad, as he prefers to be called, was born in Dathinah, Third Province. His exact birthdate is unknown--dates ranging from 1925 to 1945 have been cited. Hasani comes from a good family of one of the two leading tribes of Dathinah, the Hasani. After receiving his primary education in Dathinah, Hasani went to Aden, where he completed intermediate school. He then attended the Teachers Training Institute in Crater, Aden, and returned to Dathinah to become a schoolteacher.

Involvement in Activist Movements

Hasani is known to have been a member of the South Arabian League, one of the earliest anti-colonial nationalist organizations, which was





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formed in 1950 in Aden. After receiving guerrilla training in Cairo, Hasani in early 1965 directed dissident activities in Bayhan. Later in the year he became a leader of guerrilla-terrorist movements for the Egyptian-supported National Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (NFLOSY), the more formal and early designation for the NLF, which had been formed in June 1963 by the Egyptian Intelligence Service (EIS) in the YAR. At an unknown date Hasani belonged to the now defunct Organization for the Liberation of the Occupied South (OLOS), an amalgamation of various resistance movements formed in early 1965.

In January 1966 the OLOS and a few members of the NLF merged to form the Front for the Liberation of South Yemen (FLOSY), not to be confused with NFLOSY. Until this time the NLF had been the chosen instrument of the UAR against the British, and the EIS officers in the YAR had undertaken full responsibility for the direction, training and arming of the NLF. When the FLOSY was formed, however, Egyptian support for the NLF ended, and the FLOSY then became the principal vehicle for EIS terrorism against the British. Hasani, although publicly identified as part of the FLOSY leadership in April 1966, was primarily loyal to the main body of the NLF. When the FLOSY and the NLF became openly hostile toward each other in late 1966, Hasani ended his affiliation with the FLOSY and became a well-known terrorist with the NLF Command. In September 1967 he was one of three NLF leaders in Dathinah.

Postindependence Activities

Shortly after independence Hasani became Governor of the Second Province. Following disturbances in that province during July-August 1968, he was transferred to the Ministry of Local Administration, where he became Under Permanent Secretary, the number-three man. In the April 1969 Cabinet reshuffle, Prime Minister Faysal al-Sha'bi appointed



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Hasani Minister of Local Administration, reportedly in an effort to satisfy the Dathinis. When Haytham replaced al-Sha'bi in June 1969 he allowed Hasani to retain his portfolio. He also appointed him acting Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, a post Hasani held for only 1 month. Hasani was named to the new Agrarian Reform High Central Commission in July 1969. In the Cabinet change of 30 December 1969, Haytham designated him Minister of Defense. In that capacity, Hasani instituted revolutionary changes in the structure and programs of the armed forces and was instrumental in a purge of suspected anti-NF elements in the army.

Hasani, perturbed with the aforementioned extremist actions of the PDRY Government, met in Cairo in mid-1970 with leaders of the FLOSY, who were seeking to overthrow the NF regime. Even though he and Haytham were members of the PDRY Government, both wished to join the FLOSY in its operations against it. When the Political Bureau of the FLOSY General Command met at the end of July 1970 to discuss its plans to overthrow the PDRY regime in September, it decided that Hasani would supervise operations within the PDRY Armed Forces. The operation never materialized, however.

Becoming increasingly upset with the steadily deteriorating economic, political and security situation in the PDRY, Hasani submitted his resignation as Minister of Defense in November 1970, but Haytham and 'Ali refused to accept it. He tendered his resignation again in May 1971; again it was rejected.

Travel

Hasani has made frequent trips to neighboring Arab countries in an effort to achieve an end to the aggression and the dissident activities of anti-PDRY forces. In December 1969 and again in March 1970 he visited the YAR to discuss with its President the Saudi Arabian aggression on Wuday'ah,



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an oasis northwest of the Hadramawt. His attempts to convince the YAR to condemn the Saudis for their alleged aggression and to boycott the Islamic Conference scheduled for late March were unsuccessful. (The aggressor in the cited incident was actually the PDRY, not Saudi Arabia.)

In June 1970 Hasani traveled to Libya to attend celebrations marking the evacuation of foreign forces from Libyan territories. He toured the Tripoli Charter States (Sudan, Egypt, Syria and Libya) in December 1970 to demonstrate his country's determination to achieve unity, but he failed to attain his primary objective of admission of the PDRY to the Arab Federation Union because each country stipulated that union with the YAR was a prerequisite to admission. In an attempt to demonstrate his good faith to members of the Federation and to the YAR, Hasani tried to effect a reconciliation with the NF regime's opponents by contacting progressive nationalist elements abroad, asking them to return to the PDRY to work with the government.

Hasani has traveled to the USSR three times: in September-October 1971 he concluded economic aid agreements with the USSR; in December 1972 he witnessed celebrations of the USSR's 50th anniversary and concluded the agreement already reached between 'Ali and USSR leaders concerning providing the PDRY with sophisticated weapons and effecting rapid training of forces in the use of the weapons; in March 1973 he visited the USSR to strengthen bilateral relations.

In late September 1971 Hasani visited Egypt for talks on strengthening cooperation between the two countries. He returned in October 1972 to participate in consultations leading to the unity agreement between the two Yemens. From Egypt he traveled to Libya and Algeria. He toured Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Syria in March 1973.



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Personal Data

In May 1972 an attempt was made on Hasani's life by a man who entered his office and opened fire on him. The culprit confessed that it was the first in a series of attempts to assassinate and kidnap senior government and party officials.

Hasani is popular in the up-country areas of the PDRY as well as in the NF, where he is often called upon to settle internal party disputes. He is also popular with certain sections of the army. Hasani is married and has children. Other information on his private life is unavailable.

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